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THE MYTH OF BALDER.

A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY.

SINCE the beginning of this century great progress has been made in the solution of the problems connected with the Old Teutonic Balder Myth, thanks in part to the anthropological method as it was applied to the tradition of Balder by Sir J. G. Frazer¹ and F. Kauffmann.² The English scholar sees in Balder a vegetation demon and the oak spirit exclusively. Kauffmann, while adopting Frazer's theory that the myth of the god's death is based upon the *märchen* motif of the extraneous soul (Life Index motif), further elaborated the thesis of the English folklorist and pointed out that the Balder Myth grew out of the Balder Rite, which was nothing but the sacrifice of the Teutonic king, a piacular sacrifice, for the purpose of propitiating the chthonic powers and of assuring the well-being of the community.

The solution of Frazer and Kauffmann does not, however, exhaust the myth and legend in their entirety; it does not sufficiently take into account that both myth and legend have a long development and that other aspects exist, which belong either to the original myth or were added to it in later stages during the long development of religious

¹ *Balder the Beautiful*, London, 1913.

² F. Kauffmann, *Balder Mythus und Sage*, Strassburg, 1902; cf. *Literaturbl. f. germ. u. rom. Lit.*, 1905, c. 190; *Deutsche Litztg.*, 1903, p. 488; *Zeitsch. f. deutsche Phil.*, xxvi. 16; 23. On more recent studies on the subject cf. Gustav Neckel, *Die Ueberlieferungen vom Gotte Balder dargestellt und vergleichend untersucht*, Dortmund, 1920; cf. *Literaturbl. f. germ. u. rom. Phil.*, xlivi. cc. 164 ff.

thought. There exist several points which would require further treatment and inquiry.

1. A great number of scholars have always considered Balder as a deity of light, his opponent Hœðr as one of darkness, and there are undoubtedly elements in the tradition which justify such a theory.¹

2. The theory of Frazer and Kauffmann does not sufficiently account for the peculiar relationship between Balder, Hœðr and Nanna, and the struggle of the two gods for a woman.

3. No sufficient explanation has been given to account for the rather strange procedure of Saxo Grammaticus of using the bombast of Byzantine or Late Latin love romance in rendering an Old Scandinavian hero myth.²

4. There are traits in Balder's character which are irreconcilable, unless we assume a long development of religious thought. Partly he appears as the benign god of peace and the fruitfulness of the soil, unwarlike and in Saxo's *Gesta* even effeminate; partly he is depicted as the royal warrior who knows how to use a sword.³

5. Granting that Balder is a tree spirit, as suggested by Frazer, it is very doubtful whether he can possibly be the spirit of the oak, inasmuch as quite a number of important facts would contend against this theory.

6. There are a number of striking parallels between the Balder tradition and certain Greek legends. They have been pointed out by von Hahn⁴ and later by S. Bugge.⁵ The former of the two scholars saw in these similarities

¹ Kauffmann, pp. 1 ff., gave an outline of the development of this theory. To the names mentioned by him should be added: E. H. Meyer, *Mythologie der Germanen*, Strassburg, 1903, pp. 391 ff.; R. M. Meyer, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 313.

² Cf. on Saxo's style, Kauffmann, pp. 66 ff.

³ Lokas. 27; cf. Weinhold, *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, vii. 58.

⁴ *Sagwissenschaftliche Studien*, Jena, 1876, pp. 382 ff.

⁵ *Studien über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Helden sagen*, übers. v. Oscar Brenner, München, 1889, pp. 85-313.

proofs of Indo-European myths which took a parallel development among the Greeks and the Teutons. Bugge, on the other hand, assumed that they represent borrowings on a large scale from Low Greek and Low Latin accounts, either made by Saxo himself or by the Vikings settled in Ireland in the ninth and tenth centuries. This theory has now generally been abandoned. Its weak points need not be discussed here. They are (1) the improbability that the Low Greek sources containing obscure pagan myths should have reached Christian Ireland; (2) the still greater unlikelihood that they should have attracted the attention of the Norsemen; (3) that the latter should have put them together like a rare mosaic so that it requires all the erudition and ingenuity of a modern scholar to disentangle them. It must, however, be admitted that some of the parallels pointed out by von Hahn and Bugge remain and that no satisfactory explanation has as yet been given.

Since it will not be practicable to take up the above-mentioned points one by one, I shall choose a different arrangement whenever it appears advisable or necessary.

The word *Balder* is thought to be connected with Lith. *baltas* = white, and is derived from a Germanic stem *bal* = bright, shining, resplendent.¹ There are three different interpretations of this name possible. It may refer (1) to the light of the sun; that is, Balder is a solar deity; (2) it may merely refer to the light of the bright sky, the light of day; (3) it may have reference to moral brightness, that is, purity and goodness. In regard to the last of the three interpretations, it is safe to say that, however much it may have been possible at the time when Old Norse paganism came to be replaced by Christianity, it certainly is not primitive. Primitive deities are neither moral nor immoral; they are amoral. The choice between the first two possibilities is very difficult indeed and quite insoluble at the

¹ E. Schröder, *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, xxxv. 237 ff.

present state of our knowledge. The judicious remark of L. R. Farnell concerning the Greek word *φοῖβος*¹ should caution all mythologists; it holds true as well for the Norse equivalent of Apollo's epithet. Fortunately, a definite answer to this vexed question is for the present not necessary; but the conclusion cannot be avoided that Balder is a god of brightness and of splendour.

Among the Scandinavians, Snorri tells us, the camomile flower (*Anthemis nobilis*) was called *baldersbrá*.² Mogk supposes, and with a high degree of probability, it must be admitted, that the flower in question appeared to the Norsemen as an image of the sun.³ If this point could be proved, Balder's character as a solar deity would be established.

Finally, the *Grimnismál* mentions the palace of Balder and gives it the name *Breiðablik*. From it he looks all over the world. No weighty conclusion can be drawn from this statement of a comparatively late Eddic poem.

In his monumental work on the vegetation spirit and his rôle in the rituals of Europe and Western Asia, Sir J. G. Frazer pointed out the important part played by the mistletoe in ancient religion and modern superstition.⁴ He showed that the instrument of Balder's death grows on many forest trees in Scandinavia, and that there is ground to suppose that the myth goes back to a midsummer ritual, designed to make the crops grow and to ensure a plentiful harvest. If this was so, Balder himself was in all probability a tree spirit, and since of all European trees the most imposing was the oak, and since there can be no doubt that the oak was the sacred tree *par excellence* of the Indo-Europeans, it would appear that Balder was the spirit of the oak. The myth of Balder's death through the mistletoe would then have its origin in the belief that the life of the

¹ *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. iv. p. 140.

² *Gylfag.* cap. xxii.

³ Paul's *Grundriss*, iii. 325.

⁴ *Op. cit.* ii. 76 ff.

oak was in the mistletoe and that while the mistletoe was on the tree the latter could not perish.

There are certain facts which do not agree with some of the points brought out by the English scholar. It is quite true that the oak was the sacred tree *par excellence* of the Indo-Europeans. However, when we look for the divinities with which it is connected we shall never find any which bears even a superficial likeness to Balder. In Greece, the holy oak of Dodona was the tree of Zeus. In Italy, the oak was sacred to Jupiter, whose image on the Capitol at Rome seems to have originally been a sacred oak.¹ In ancient Germany, the famous oak of Gaismar, in Hesse, felled by Saint Boniface, was the sacred tree of Donar, the continental equivalent of the Norse Thor. The holy oak of Romowe, in ancient Prussia, was the incarnation of the god Perkunus, and among the Slavs the oak seems to have been the sacred tree of the god Perun. Now all these divinities, the Greek Zeus, the Italian Jupiter, the German Donar, the Baltic Perkunus, and the Slavonic Perun were gods of the sky and of the thunderstorm, the chief divinities of these nations. No scholar, W. Schwartz excepted, ever proposed a connection of Balder the Beautiful, the *semideus* of Saxo Grammaticus, with the King of Olympus or of Walhall, or even with Thor, and such a connection is well-nigh impossible. Everything we know of Balder and these deities would contend against such a thesis.

But there is still another obstacle to Frazer's suggestion. The North-European mistletoe (*Viscum album*) rarely grows on oaks.² As Frazer himself points out in an appendix to his work *Balder the Beautiful*, quoting from W. Schlich, *Manual of Forestry*, IV., London, 1907, p. 412 : "The common mistletoe *Viscum album*, L. lives as a semi-parasite on many conifers and broad-leaved trees, and

¹ Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, Berlin, 1881-3, i. 108.

² Frazer, *op. cit.* ii. 315.

chiefly on their branches. The hosts, or trees on which it lives, are, most frequently, the apple tree, both wild and cultivated varieties; next, the silver-fir; frequently birches, poplars except aspen, limes, willows, Scots pine, mountain ash, and hawthorn; occasionally, robinia, maples, horse-chestnut, hornbeam, and aspen. It is very rarely found on oaks, but has been observed on pedunculate oak at Thornbury, Gloucestershire, and elsewhere in Europe, also on *Quercus coccinea*, Moench., and *Q. palustris*, Moench. The alders, beech and spruce appear to be always free from mistletoe, and it very rarely attacks pear trees . . .”

In 1917, J. R. Harris showed that in Greece the mistletoe was connected with Apollo and that Apollo was originally probably the spirit of the apple tree.¹ If this state of facts obtains in Greece, where another species of mistletoe is found (*Loranthus Europaeus*) which attacks chiefly oaks,² how far stronger is the case that Balder was *not* the oak in countries such as Northern Europe, where *Viscum album* is the only kind of mistletoe existing. Of course, if we assume that the cult of Balder arose in Central Europe and thence migrated to the North this objection would not be so strong, though in that case the oak would probably have been replaced by some other tree. At any rate, it is fairly certain that Balder was not the oak, but some other tree, most probably one of those on which *Viscum album* is known to grow most frequently.

The struggle of two gods or heroes for a woman and which ends with the death of both is by no means uncommon in the legendary history of the nations of the old world. Sophus Bugge pointed out that the struggle of Balder and Høðr has a parallel in the fight of Apollo and Idas for

¹ *The Ascent of Olympus*, pp. 35 ff.

² This kind of mistletoe is found throughout Southern Europe and as far north as Saxony, but not in Britain and Scandinavia; cf. Frazer, *op. cit.* ii. 317.

Marpessa¹ and of Achilles and Alexander for Helen.² The examples might be multiplied. Other Greek myths relate the battle of two couples of heroes, the Dioscuri and the Apharides, for a pair of virgins, the Leukippides, which originally ended with the death of the four heroes.³ The Theban legend knew of a struggle between the twins Amphion and Zethos on the one side and Lykos and Nykteus on the other.⁴ The woman whom they fight for is Antiope, the mother of the first twin couple, the daughter and niece of the second. Another twin pair whose history bears a striking similarity to that of Amphion and Zethos is Pelias and Neleus who likewise are represented as quarrelling.⁵ A pair of heroes, Alexander and Aeneas, abduct Helen, another pair, Menelaos and Agamemnon, lead her back.⁶ In the *Mahābhārata* we find an episode which relates the adventures of Sundas and Upasundas, two inseparable brothers who live in perfect concord. Then the gods, to test their friendship, send a nymph of marvellous beauty. The two brothers, on seeing her, desire each the exclusive possession of the divine maiden. They fight so long and so desperately that both die. In another Hindu epic, the *Rāmāyana*, the two brothers Bālin and Sugrīvas, children of the sun and so perfectly resembling one another that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other, are intimate friends, but become bitter enemies on account of the woman Rumā. English readers are reminded of the story of Hamlet. Finally, there exist a large number of local legends, scattered all over Central and Northern Europe and which tell of a deadly fight between two brothers for the love of a woman.⁷ One of these was known to Servius,

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 107.

² *Ibid.* pp. 85 ff.

³ S. Eitrem, *Die göttlichen Zwillinge bei den Griechen*, Christiania, 1902, *Videnskabsselskabets Skrifter*. ii.; *Historisk-filos. Klasse*, No. 2, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 42 ff.

⁵ Apollod. *Bibl.* i. o. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁷ K. Müllenhoff, *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogtümer Schleswig Holstein und Lauenburg*, Kiel, 1845, pp. 45-6, 47, 182, 188, 553; A.

the famous commentator of Virgil. He tells the following story. In Gargani summitate duo sepulchra esse dicuntur fratum duorum, quorum cum major virginem quandam despondisset et eam minor frater conaretur auferre, armis inter se decertati sunt, ibique ad memoriam invicem inter se occidentes sepulti, quae res admirationem habet illam, qua si qui duo inter ipsam sylvam agentes iter uno impetu vel eodem momento saxa adversum sepulchra jecerint, vi nescio qua saxa separata ad sepulchra singula decidunt.¹ In practically all the instances cited the fighters are either brothers or near relatives of a less close degree. Saxo says nothing about a relationship between Balder and Høðr; but according to the *Snorra Edda* they are brothers.² In most of the parallels quoted it is to be noted that the hostile brothers are either twins or pairs of twins, or their twinship can be easily inferred from their great friendship and their striking similarity; in the case of the brothers in the *Mahābhārata* also from the likeness of their names. It is possible and assumed by some scholars that these fighting twin couples are a secondary development of the fighting twin brothers.³ The object of their quarrel is not necessarily a woman. Other causes are adduced, for instance, the question of the succession to their father's inheritance

Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, Leipzig, 1848, pp. 42, 292; A. Niederhöffer, *Mecklenburgs Volkssagen*, Leipzig, 1858-62, i. 132, ii. 157, iii. 163, iv. 160; W. Hertz, *Deutsche Sage im Elsass*, Stuttgart, 1872, p. 108. The motif of the hostile brothers is also found in modern Greece; cf. G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, Cambridge, 1903, pp. 290, 292.

¹ Comm. in Virg. *Aen.* xi. 247.

² F. Niedner, *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, xlvi. 252, points out that the songs of the *Edda Saemundar* may likewise have known the fact that Balder and Høðr were brothers. He thinks that no conclusion can be drawn from the silence of those sources on this point; cf. also Bugge, *op. cit.* p. 262, and Detter in *Paul und Braune's Beiträge*, xix. 500.

Etrem, p. 11.

or the paternal blessing,¹ or the succession to the paternal throne,² or the question as to who shall be ruler of the newly founded city,³ or it is sought merely in the opposite mental disposition of the twins.⁴ In a number of Greek legends there is evidence to show that the twin couples did not fight over a woman at all, but over a herd of cattle.⁵ In many stories where the cause of the quarrel was originally not a woman, she is introduced later. Thus Apollodoros mentions a variant according to which Proitos seduced Danae, the daughter of his brother and that this was the origin of their deadly feud. In the story of the enmity of Minos and Sarpedon, sons of Zeus and Europe, the brothers do not fight over a woman, but over the love of the boy Miletos. Inasmuch as the habit revealed in the story was unknown to the oldest Greeks and probably an introduction from the Orient, it is possible that Miletos took the place of a woman in the narrative.

At any rate, it is clear that the twin element plays an important rôle in connection with the motif of the hostile brothers, and this suggests the idea that they are fighting because they are twins. Such a theory is corroborated by a large number of analogues collected from all over the earth, showing that there is a wide-spread belief that twins are hostile to each other and that twin kills twin.⁶ The presumption is therefore that Balder and Høðr are twins.

¹ In the story of Esau and Jacob, *Gen.* xxv. xxvii. xxviii.

² This is the case with Akrisios and Proitos; cf. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Myth.* i. c. 213; also with Alrekr and Eirikr in Norse legend; cf. Detter in *Paul und Braune's Beitr.* xviii. 83.

³ In the legend of Romulus and Remus.

⁴ Cf. J. R. Harris, *Boanerges*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 159, 308, 336; M. Albert, *Le Culte de Castor et Pollux en Italie*, Paris, 1883, p. 78. No explanation is given for the slaying of Iasion by his twin brother Dar-danos (Servius in *Verg. Aen.* iii. 167).

⁵ Eitrem, p. 7.

⁶ Harris, *Boanerges*, pp. 86, 92, 179 f., 272, 279, 336, 381-2.

The theory that there is Dioscurism at the bottom of the Balder Myth is in itself nothing new. It has been adopted by quite a large number of scholars who dealt with the story of Balder.¹ Let us say at once that with the Scandinavian material now at the disposal of the mythologists it is impossible to come to a positive result on this matter. None of the sources mentions the fact that Balder and Høðr are twins, many do not even say that they are brothers. The Dioscurism of Balder and Høðr can be established with a fair degree of probability only if it can be shown that most of the elements constituting the myth belong to a mythological or folkloristic group of motifs most, if not all, of which are connected with Dioscurism. In the following sections of this study I shall endeavour to point out a number of Greek parallels which must be considered as closely akin to, perhaps identical with the Balder Myth. I do not doubt that similar parallels can be found in the mythologies of other Indo-European nations, perhaps even among the Semites and Turanians. But I must leave all these to scholars more competent than myself.

In his work on the origin of the Balder Myth, Sophus Bugge called attention to several parallels of the Icelandic story and the narrative of Saxo with myths and legends of Greek antiquity.² Among others he compared Høðr with Paris-Alexander, Balder with Achilles, Balder with Apollo, Høðr with Idas, and Nanna with Marpessa. Since the characteristics which these heroes have in common may not be altogether fortuitous, I shall try to bring out such facts as will be likely to throw new light on the myth under discussion.

¹ Cf. Kauffmann, *op. cit.* p. 4, to which should be added: Detter, *Paul und Braune's Beitr.* xviii. 82-8, xix. 495-516; Niedner, *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, xlvi. 229-58; E. H. Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 393 ff.; Schück, *Studier i Nordisk Literatur- och Religionshistoria*, Stockholm, 1907, pp. 103 ff. For a comprehensive bibliography of Teutonic Dioscurism cf. K. F. Johansson, *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi*, xxxv. 1918, pp. 1-22.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 85-156, 201-14.

There are many data which would tend to show that Paris is but a hypostasis of Apollo himself. Achilles is foretold that he will die through an arrow of Apollo¹ or of Apollo and Paris.² According to some versions he is killed by Paris alone,³ according to others by Paris with the bow of Apollo.⁴ Some sources say that Paris shot the arrow, but that Apollo directed it so that it hit Achilles.⁵ Then there are accounts which relate that Apollo assumed the shape of Paris when killing Achilles.⁶ Quite a number of versions agree in saying that the Grecian hero met his fate in the sanctuary of Apollo.⁷ According to Dracontius,⁸ Apollo induces the Trojans to receive Paris in their city, when he returns from his flocks, in spite of the sinister omens that accompany his entry.

There exists a representation of the famous judgment of Paris in which the judge is not the Trojan prince, but Apollo himself,⁹ and there is sufficient evidence to show that this representation is not due to the caprice of some artist, but was based on a sufficiently old and trustworthy tradition.¹⁰ Gardner thinks that a shifting of the tradition took place and that Apollo came to take the place of Paris.¹¹ Harris, on the other hand, inclines to believe that the shifting is in the opposite direction and that Apollo was replaced by Paris.¹² However this may be, it is certain

¹ *Il.* xxi. 277; Soph. *Philokt.* 332; Aesch. *fragm.* 340; Horat. *Od.* iv. 6. 3; Quintus Smyrn. iii. 1 ff.; cf. Roscher, *op. cit.* i. 1, c. 47.

² Ovid. *Metam.* xiii. 500.

³ Eurip. *Androm.* 655; *Hek.* 387 f.; Plut. *Comp. Lys. cum Sulla*, 4; Plut. *Q. Symp.* ix. 13. 2; Seneca, *Troad*, 356; Eustath. *Schol. Od.* 1696; cf. Roscher, i. 1, c. 48.

⁴ Eustath. *Schol. Od.* 1696.

⁵ Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 57; Ovid, *Metam.* xii. 600.

⁶ Hygin. *fab.* 107, 113.

⁷ Tzetz. *Lyk.* 307; cf. also Roscher, i. 1, cc. 49-50.

⁸ *De raptu Hel.* 61 ff.

⁹ *Journ. of Hell. Stud.* xxxv. 1915, pp. 66-75.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 69. ¹¹ *Ibid.* ¹² *The Ascent of Olympus*, p. 44.

that hero and god must bear some similarity to make it possible that the one took the other's place in the legend of the Judgment and that of Achilles' death.

It is certain that Apollo, whatever may have been his origins, was largely a god of light and brightness at the classical period and continued so until the end of paganism. It is to be noted that such a stage appears to have existed for Paris, too, irrespective of the furthest origin of the hero. Uschold derived the name from the root *pa*.¹ Usener was of the same opinion, declaring the name as meaning the "shining one."² Cox considered Paris as a solar hero.³

It has never been pointed out, to my knowledge, that the two opponents Paris and Achilles are by no means as dissimilar as they appear at first sight. Of the Trojan prince tradition reports that he was a rather soft, even effeminate hero, fond of music,⁴ a good orator,⁵ agile⁶ and, above all, what is commonly called a "lady-killer." Nevertheless, he is by no means a coward, for there are enough episodes in the *Iliad* and elsewhere, showing him in no mean rôle.⁷ Now some of these very characteristics are found in Achilles. I shall here sum them up, giving the necessary references in the footnotes. In the *Iliad* he is depicted as spending whole days on the shore of the sea singing and playing on the phorminx.⁸ This pre-dilection is also mentioned by the commentators of Homer, who evidently drew on ancient sources.⁹ Even after his death he is addicted to song and music on the lonely island in the Euxine sea, where his soul has found a resting-place.¹⁰ A general softness of character is clearly discernible in the

¹ Quoted in Roscher, iii. 1, c. 1581.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Il.* iii. 52-5; Bugge, p. 86.

⁵ *Il.* iii. 39; Bugge, p. 87.

⁶ Serv. in Verg. *Aen.* v. 370; Malalas, i. 106; Bugge, p. 88.

⁷ Roscher, iii. 1, cc. 1599-1600. In the *Iliad* there is a certain inconsistency in the accounts of Paris' character.

⁸ *Il.* ix. 186 ff.

⁹ *Schol. Il.* ix. 186 ff.

¹⁰ Philostr. *Her.* 747.

hero. He easily bursts into tears,¹ and he bears with pain his fate which withheld from him the joys of a peaceful life in the circle of a family.² This softness and effeminacy is most strongly brought out in the famous Deidamia episode, where he appears in woman's dress. It may be objected that this is a late invention; but on the other hand it may be said that this episode could become attached only to a soft hero. Finally, there is enough evidence to show that if Paris was successful with the fair sex, Achilles had no special reason to be jealous of him.³ I intentionally omit the beauty of both Paris and Achilles, because this trait is too much of a commonplace to be profitably used in this examination. Mention must however be made of the fact that a great many scholars considered Achilles a hero of light and brightness, "light" taken in its widest sense as referring to any phenomenon connected with the change of day and night. Fick connected the name with $\alpha\chi\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$ —the "dark one."⁴ Sonne considered Achilles a god of light in general and translated his name by "shining brightly."⁵ Max Müller thought him identical with the Hindu solar hero Ahargu.⁶ Gerhard assumed a double nature of the hero; according to him Achilles was a god of floating light, a stream of light and a reflection of the sun god himself.⁷ Again it is likely that in the development of religious thought, a stage, and a rather important one, must be assumed where Achilles was conceived as a hero of light, perhaps a solar hero. This would make him still more decisively a counterpart of Paris whom he resembles in so many other respects. What has been established so far, then, is the likelihood that both Paris and Achilles are heroes of light and that the former is distinctly a hypostasis of Apollo, the god of brightness.

Achilles is, however, not the only opponent whom

¹ *Il.* i. 349; xxiv. 507.

² *Il.* ix. 397.

³ Roscher, i. 1, cc. 14 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.* c. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Apollo is given in Greek legend. There existed a myth or cycle of myths narrating the fight between Apollo and the hero Idas. One story tells that both Apollo and Idas woo Marpessa, the daughter of Euenos. Idas abducts her and reaches Messenia. There Apollo tries to take his wife from him. He resists, and a struggle threatens to break out, when Zeus interferes and decides that the damsel is to have her choice as to whom she will follow. She prefers the mortal, as she is afraid that the immortal will leave her when she grows old.¹ According to Homer² Apollo succeeds in taking Marpessa away from Idas and enjoys her for some time until Idas wins her back for himself. A version also appears to have existed according to which Apollo violates Marpessa.³

Let us examine the nature of Idas.⁴ In most legends he appears as the son of Aphareus and the twin brother of Lynkeus. Both are called the Aapharides and are together engaged in quite a number of adventures, such as the hunt of the Calydonian boar and the Argonaut expedition. Idas and Lynkeus are perfectly clear names, meaning the "seeing one" and the "shining one."⁵ This fact and their fight for the Leukippides⁶ make it evident that they are a pair of heroes of light and brightness.⁷ The fight of one or two pairs of twins for a woman is a wide-spread motif in Greek legend, as can be seen from the examples given above. This and the fact that the tale of Marpessa is the only one of the Idas myths in which this hero is not associated with Lynkeus but with Apollo, make it likely that either he or Apollo did not play a part in the original story, that either one was introduced later to replace Lynkeus or some counterpart, perhaps twin, of Apollo. The character of both Lynkeus and Apollo and their

¹ Apollod. *Bibl.* i. 7, 8 f.

² *Il.* ix. 564.

³ Clemens Alex. *protr.* p. 9, 32.

⁴ Roscher, ii. 1, cc. 96-103; Eitrem, pp. 7-12.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 7, n. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*

counterparts as heroes of light and brightness made such a substitution possible. The struggle between Idas and Apollo is then a Dioscuric myth, replacing an older one which in all probability was likewise Dioscuric. This leads us to suspect that a similar state of things exists or rather existed for the fighting pair Paris-Apollo and Achilles, that is, that both or either one took the place of some Dioscuric heroes or hero. To prove this thesis the following facts must be established :

1. That there are traces of Dioscurism in the myths of Apollo,
2. that Paris is a Dioscure,
3. that Achilles is a Dioscure,
4. that Achilles and Paris are fighting for the same woman.

All these facts can be proved with a fair degree of certainty.

The twinship of Apollo and Artemis is a fact well known to all students of Greek mythology. Less known is the fact that this twinship and even the relationship of the two deities as brother and sister does not belong to the oldest stratum of Greek religion but is a later development caused by several circumstances. Long before Delos became a centre of the Apollo cult, the White Maidens of the North, Hyperoche and Laodike,¹ were worshipped there. Apollo was called Phœbus and Artemis Phœbe. But Phœbe was also one of the Leukippides worshipped in Sparta in olden times. The theory is that Hilaira and Phœbe were replaced by Phœbus and Phœbe, and that these names were later attributed to Apollo and Artemis, younger deities who took the place of the older twins.² Pausanias relates that upon the approach of the Gauls to Delphi, two male brothers, Hyperochos and Laodokos, the male counterparts of the

¹ Herod. iv. 33; cf. Harris, *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*, Cambridge, 1906.

² *Ibid.* p. 139.

Delian White Maidens from the North, repelled the barbarians and saved the sanctuary.¹ At Delphi a cult of two heroes, Phylakos and Autonoos, was localized, and there existed a legend according to which they had saved the sanctuary from the Persians.² Both pairs are undoubtedly Dioscuric.³ The name Phylake was later given to Artemis, which again seems to indicate that Apollo and his twin sister took the place of an older Dioscuric pair.⁴ Harris furthermore points out that many of the functions generally attributed to the Dioscuri were exercised by Apollo and Artemis.⁵

The Dioscuric character of Paris-Alexander was recognized by Eitrem,⁶ who mentions the following data. In company with Aeneas, Paris abducts Helen.⁷ This pair then plays the same rôle as Theseus and Peirithoos, Idas and Lynkeus,⁸ Agamemnon and Menelaos in the Helen legends, Amphion and Zethos in the Theban legend, and the Apharides and Dioscuri in the abduction of the Leukippides.

Achilles likewise was a Dioscure. Tradition narrates that after his death the hero's soul was relegated to an island in the Euxine sea, Leuke, near the mouths of the Danube. Here he was the object of a widely known cult.⁹ This cult and the legends told of Achilles are decidedly Dioscuric in character. The Euxine sea was generally known by the dangers which beset navigation along its shores. The region near the mouths of the Danube, best known through Ovid's *Tristia*, was especially dangerous

¹ *Descr. Gr.* x. 23. 2.

² *Herod.* viii. 35-9.

³ Harris, *Cult.* p. 140.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Boanerges*, p. 319.

⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 31.

⁷ Proklos, *Chrest.* lib. i.; cf. Kinkel, *Ep. gr. fragm.* i, p. 17; Dictys, i. 3; Dares, c. 9. 38.

⁸ Plut. *Theseus* xxxi.

⁹ Eurip. *Androm.* 1260; Pind. *Nem.* 4. 79; Skyl. ed. Klaus., p. 209; Demetr. Calatian. ap. Skymn. *Peripl. Ponti Eux.* 21.

on account of the sandbars and the barbarian inhabitants of the shores.¹ The spirit of the hero was said to announce to the shipwrecked at what spot of the island they had better land.² Or he appeared to the sailors in their dreams to point out to them the place best fitted for anchorage.³ Also he was seen in the company of Patroklos. Some saw him sitting on the main mast or on the tip of the yard. He used to appear as a handsome young man with blond hair and shining armour.⁴ The wide flat shores near the mouths of rivers were called the race courses of Achilles.⁵ He was honoured as a protector of sailors, and as such his cult was established in many islands of the Euxine sea, in seaports along the coast of Asia Minor and Greece proper,⁶ on Astypalaea, one of the Sporades,⁷ and Achillea, an island near Samos, in the Aegean.⁸ Ἀχιλλείος λιμήν was the name of a port near the Tainaron, now the Bay of Marinari.⁹ In all these cults the hero's relationship to the water and the sea is clearly recognizable. According to some sources he took part in the battle fought between the Lokri and the Krotoniates on the bank of the river Sagra, in 560 B.C.¹⁰ Later he repelled, in company with Athene, Alarich from the walls of Athens.¹¹ Now all these traits are generally attributed to the Dioscuri. They are the helpers of shipwrecked mariners; they have sanctuaries on dangerous spots along the coast line or on islands, near the mouths of rivers and wherever there is special danger.¹² The Dioscuri appear on the masts of ships, a phenomenon now

¹ Roscher, i. 1, c. 61.

² Phil. *Her.* 748.

³ Arrian, *Peripl.* 34; *Geogr. Gr. min.* i. 399, ed. Müller.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Schol. Apollon. Argon.* ii. 658.

⁶ Roscher, i. 1, cc. 59-61.

⁷ Cicero, *De nat. deor.* iii. 18. 45.

⁸ Pliny, *Hist. nat.* v. 37.

⁹ Paus. *Descr. Gr.* iii. 25. 4.

¹⁰ *Schol. Plat. Phaed.* p. 60; *Hermae Schol. ibid.* c. 19, p. 99; Isocr. *Hel. Encom.* c. 28, p. 218 f.

¹¹ Syriani, *Hymn.* ap. Zosimus, v. c. 6, 2, p. 407 f.

¹² Harris, *Boanerges*, pp. 195 ff.

known under the name of St. Elmo's fire, and which, in antiquity, was supposed to be a sign of good fortune.¹ In the battle on the Sagra, Achilles usurped the place occupied by the Heavenly Twins in most accounts of that battle.² Twin brothers save Delphi from the Persians and later from the Gallic hordes, just as Achilles saves Athens from the Goths.

These facts will unquestionably establish that Achilles was a Dioscuric hero ; for only on this basis can we explain his Dioscuric functions. There remains to be proved that Achilles and Paris were Dioscuri fighting for the same woman, and here the question must be answered, What was Achilles' relationship to Helen ? There was a current legend according to which Achilles lived with Helen on the island of the Euxine sea.³ According to some accounts they had for a child the winged Euphorion.⁴ There also existed a tradition which knew of Achilles' wedding with Helen near Leuke.⁵ A Laconic legend narrated that Achilles had wooed Helen before her marriage with Menelaos.⁶ Post-Homeric legends told of a miraculous meeting of Achilles and Helen through the mediation of Aphrodite and Thetis.⁷ Lykophron speaks of a union of Achilles and Helen in a dream of the hero.⁸ Finally, there seem to have existed statues of both Achilles and Helen in the hero's sanctuary on the island of Leuke.⁹

I have tried to show in one of the foregoing sections that Apollo-Idas certainly was a deity of light when he was associated with Lynkeus and the Leukippides, and that

¹ *Ibid.* p. 205 ; Albert, *op. cit.* pp. 55 and 63.

² Cicero, *De nat. deor.* ii. 2. 6 ; iii. 5. 13 ; Diod. Sic. *Exc. Vat.* vii.-x. ; Justin. xx. 3. 4.

³ Paus. *Descr. Gr.* iii. 19. 11.

⁴ Ptolem. *Heph.* 4.

⁵ Philostr. *Her.* 746.

⁶ Paus. *Descr. Gr.* iii. 24. 10 ; cf. also Roscher, i. 2, c. 1936.

⁷ Welcker, *ep. C.* ii. 105.

⁸ 171.

⁹ Philostr. *Her.* 745.

the same is probably true of Paris. The name of Helen likewise expresses “heavenly splendour,”¹ and the natural inference would be that the counterpart of Apollo-Paris, Achilles, is also a hero who is connected with the phenomena of light, either the light of the sun or the brightness of day and of the sky.

We find, then, in Hellenic legend the motif of two heroes of light and brightness fighting for the love of a woman. The two heroes are twin brothers or have replaced such. They are warriors, but not primarily so, as both show features of culture heroes, a certain softness of character; both stand for the arts of peace, music, eloquence, navigation. One of them is killed by the shot of the other. Both are of divine descent; one of them is quasi-invulnerable. Turning now to the Teutonic Balder legend, we again find two heroes, one of whom is certainly a deity of light and brightness, fighting for a woman. Both are warriors, but primarily skilled in the arts of peace.² One of them is depicted of a softness quite unusual for a Teutonic hero.³ Both are of divine descent and brothers; one of

¹ Eitrem, p. 25; cf. also Roscher, i. 2, c. 1977. It is to be noted that twin heroes are generally associated with phenomena of light and darkness. Thus we have Lykos and Nykteus in the legend of Thebes, the Hindu Aṣvins and the Lettic “sons of God.” Furthermore, the mother of Dardanos is usually called *Electra*, the shining one, while the mother of Iasion is given the name *Hemera* (=as bright as day) by Hellanikos (ap. Eust. *Od.* v. p. 1528; Eudoc. p. 196). On the other hand, Dardanos and Iasion are certainly a twin couple of culture heroes, one of whom kills the other, as was pointed out above. In view of these striking analogies it is justifiable to conclude that two brothers, connected with phenomena of light and darkness, and one of whom slays the other, are twins, even if we should not possess the additional data of their fight for the love of a woman, as we do in the case of the Norse Balder Myth.

² Snorri, *Gylfag.* cap. 22, cf. Bugge, pp. 86 ff.

³ Saxo, p. 74; also in the *Snorra Edda*; cf. Kauffmann, pp. 59 f., who observes that Snorri’s description of Balder reminds him of the way in which the Greeks depicted their Dioscuri. Now granting that the technique of such descriptions was transmitted to the Scandi-

them is quasi-invulnerable. These parallels are so striking that it may be permissible to conclude that even where the Teutonic sources are silent concerning other features and attributes of Balder and Høðr they are likely to agree with the Greek myths which have been pointed out or reconstructed. But let us examine first the two Teutonic protagonists and see whether we may not be able to bring out traits which have not been given all the attention they deserve in the light of this parallelism.

In the *Snorra Edda*, Balder's opponent is depicted as a blind god. Mythologists are agreed that this blindness, if primitive, would indicate what in classical antiquity would be called a chthonic deity, a god of darkness, of death and of the lower world. Unfortunately, it is impossible to attach much importance to Høðr's blindness in Snorri's narrative, as this trait is probably not primitive at all, but due to the efforts of later mythographers who wished to make him a blind tool in the hands of Loki.¹ From the fact that Høðr's tomb was shown in Zealand and that a cult was probably attached to it, it appears fairly certain that at least in some localities he was considered as a chthonic divinity.

Høðr kills Balder, the god of light, sending him to the lower world, and then is killed in his turn by Balder's avenger. Both Balder and Høðr are said to come back, at the end of time, to reign together in peace, in a better world. It is to be observed that the myth of the dying and resurrected god occurs in many religious systems, being found in the legends of Ishtar, of Orpheus, of Attis, of Osiris, of Adonis, of Demeter and Kore, and in the monotheistic religion which arose in the Orient when the others

navians through scholastic channels, yet it must be admitted that the figure of Balder lent itself to this art. The same can be said of the description in Saxo's *Gesta*. Only culture heroes such as Balder and Frey were capable of this kind of artistic treatment.

¹ Cf. Kauffmann, p. 54.

had pretty nearly run their course. As has been noted repeatedly, these legends must be regarded as nature myths, representing the growing and decaying of vegetation every year in the countries of the temperate zones. There is nothing especially Indo-European about them, as they are found among Semites and Hamites as well. What is of greater importance for our purpose is to find out whether or not there exist such vegetation myths in connection with Dioscuric legends.

Turning to Greek mythology, we should first think of the stories of Kastor and Polydeukes, one of whom rises when the other goes to the netherworld. This parallelism would be strengthened by the fact that there are traces of a hostility between the two brothers.¹ However, the facts do not permit us to base much upon this evidence, as it is not free from all doubt, and we shall have to look further in the field.

The true *dénouement* of the myth of Apollo and Idas was not known in classical times ; at least it has not come down to us. It is, however, fairly certain that the story narrated by Apollodoros is not the original version.

It has been established beyond doubt, I think, that Apollo, if he was not originally Dioscuric, certainly became so by taking the place of one of two twin heroes in many legends. The question whether he ever was a chthonic divinity cannot be answered offhand. It is certain that during the classical and Hellenistic periods no decidedly chthonic Apollo cult existed of which records have been preserved. This does not necessarily mean that he was always free from chthonic features, and I think that traces can be found pointing to the fact that in pre-historic times he was not the bright immortal, antagonistic to the very idea of death and decay.

¹ Cf. the duel of the twins on two Roman coins (De Witte, *Revue numismatique*, 1839, pp. 92-3), and their fight in the sanctuary at Sparta, Lactant. ad Statium, *Theb.* vii. 412.

One of the main characteristics of the chthonic hero or the dead god in his tomb. The Cretans showed the tomb of Zeus on their island.¹ A certain place in Arkadia boasted of the tomb of Asklepios.² Hyakinthos had his tomb at Amyklai. Similarly the grave of Apollo was shown at Delphi.³ Still more ominous than this very important fact is Apollo's association with so many mortal heroes, whose chthonic character will be set forth in the following section.

Achilles was decidedly a chthonic divinity. On his tomb, the *'Αχιλλείον* in the Troad, regular sacrifices for the dead were offered by the inhabitants of Troy.⁴ Pausanias mentions a funeral service of the Elean women in honour of the hero.⁵ A similar funeral celebration was observed by the women of Kroton, who were not allowed to wear either ornaments or costly dress during the ceremonies.⁶

Still clearer is the case in regard to the cult and myth of Hyakinthos. The legend of the hero killed accidentally by Apollo is too familiar to all students of mythology to be recounted here. Pausanias relates that at Amyklai there was an ancient statue of Apollo on a base of the shape of an altar which was regarded as the grave of Hyakinthos. There was a bronze door in the sides of the altar through which offerings were poured to the dead hero before the sacrifice to the god.⁷ A gloss of Hesychios states that the

¹ Cicero, *De nat. deor.* iii. § 53.

² O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, München, 1906, p. 195.

³ Porph. *Vita Pythag.* 16; cf. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, London, 1913, i. 34.

⁴ Strabo, *Geogr.* xiii. p. 596; Pliny, v. 125; Solin. *Polyh.* xl. 51; Herod. v. 94; Pomp. Mela, i. 18; Steph. Byz. under *'Αχιλλεός δρόμος*; Philostr. V.A.T. 153; Eust. in *Il.* vii. 86.

⁵ *Descr. Gr.* vi. 23. 3; cf. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, Freiburg i. B. 1898, pp. 153, 171, n. 4.

⁶ Lyk. 856 ff.

⁷ *Descr. Gr.* iii. 1. 3.

Laconic Apollo *κουρίδιος* was also called *τετράχειρ* or the four-handed Apollo.¹ Farnell draws the undoubtedly correct conclusion that the title arose from some double herme-representation, in which Apollo was grouped back to back with some other personage, probably Hyakinthos.² If this be true, we have here a striking parallelism to the myth of the Moliones; for according to another gloss of Hesychios and a fragment of Ibykos,³ they were a pair of Siamese twins. Later this was no longer understood, and thus we find that Pherekydes narrates how each of the Moliones had two heads, four hands and four feet.⁴ Now this is the same blunder which Hesychios committed in his gloss on the four-handed Apollo, and the natural inference would be that Apollo, or rather the divinity whom he displaced,⁵ and Hyakinthos were sometimes thought of as Siamese twins. But just as the Moliones were more often represented as separate twins,⁶ so Apollo and Hyakinthos certainly were not always thought of as grown together, for only thus could the myth of Apollo killing Hyakinthos have arisen. But the conclusion stands that Apollo and Hyakinthos are another pair of Dioscuri.⁷ The cult of Hyakinthos is clearly chthonic.⁸ The god is interested in

¹ Farnell, *op. cit.* iv. 371, n. 45.

² Farnell, *op. cit.* iv. 127; Wide, *op. cit.* p. 95.

³ Eitrem, p. 12.

⁴ Schol. A in *Il.* xi. 709; cf. also Apollod. *Bibl.* ii. 7. 2.

⁵ In all probability Apollo took the place of an older, proto-Hellenic divinity; cf. Farnell, iv. 127.

⁶ Eitrem, p. 12.

⁷ This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that Amyklai seems to have been a centre of Dioscuric cults. There lay the tombs of Alexandra, Kassandra and Agamemnon, and there both Alexandros and Deiphobos probably received divine honours. Cf. G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, Oxford, 1911, p. 238, and Wide, *op. cit.* p. 335. According to Pausanias, *Descr. Gr.* iii. 18. 10, there existed in the city a cult of the two Horai from times immemorial.

⁸ Farnell, iv. 125.

agriculture ; he has attracted unto himself a vegetation ritual, and, as Farnell expresses it, is considered as a male counterpart of Kore.¹ Thus we discovered, in Greek mythology, at least two counterparts of Apollo, the god of brightness, both chthonic, twin-brothers of his or conceived as such and killed by him. It is true, in the Norse myth the god of brightness is killed by Høðr who remains on earth, at least for some time after the death of his opponent. But it must be noted that Balder is in the same position as Hyakinthos, Attis, Adonis and so many other vegetation heroes, depicted as bright and young, but doomed to an untimely death. After the fatal shot of Høðr, Balder is a chthonic divinity, like the others. Saxo narrates Balder's burial at some length. He lies under a barrow which still subsisted down to the time of the *Gesta Danorum*. Saxo tells a story of some men who tried to plunder the burial place, but were driven away in sudden panic, a story which Saxo himself appears to believe.² Thus there can be no doubt that as late as the twelfth century of our era the people of Zealand knew of the ancient cult place and still imagined their hero to be alive in his tomb, protecting his country even after his death, as did so many Grecian heroes.³ Balder and his opponent also had cult places in Jutland.⁴

Apollo and his counterpart Hyakinthos are not primarily divinities of war ; they are vegetation heroes ; their province is peace and peaceful pursuits.⁵ Sophus Bugge pointed out the character of Høðr, such as he appears in Saxo's narrative, and which makes him essentially a culture hero. The euhemerism of the Danish historian unfortunately prevented him from giving us an idea of his functions

¹ *Ibid.* p. 126.

² *Ed. cit.* pp. 77-8.

³ Kauffmann, p. 90.

⁴ Müllenhoff, *Sagen*, pp. 373 ff. ; cf. also Kauffmann, pp. 89 f. ; 110 ff.

⁵ Farnell, iv. 124 ff. On the essential character of Apollo as a god of peace cf. Serv. *Aen.* i. 329.

in the ancient cult. We are in a better position as regards his counterpart. The Icelandic sources agree in depicting Balder as the good and pure god, the god of peace and the works of peace, the god of justice and of peaceful assembly at the moot.¹ Again our sources do not say anything about his other functions.² We can surmise that he may perhaps have been a protector of navigation.³

Of the two opponents, one is quasi-immortal, the other sometimes mortal, sometimes immortal. Balder can be wounded by just one weapon, Achilles in just one spot. Hœðr is mortal both in Saxo and the *Snorra Edda*; so are Idas, Hyakinthos and Paris. Apollo is immortal. The question is, which represents the more archaic stage, the struggle of the quasi-immortal hero with the mortal or with the immortal? It is generally assumed that Hyakinthos and Idas are ancient heroes of proto-Hellenic or early Hellenic populations. As regards Paris, the matter is not settled, but the presumption, on these analogies, is that Apollo came to take his place at a later stage of mythic development. Thus it would seem that the Norse saga represents an earlier stage than the Greek stories in which Apollo is a protagonist.

From the above exposition of the facts it can be safely inferred that the story of Balder and Hœðr is the exact counterpart of certain Greek myths, whose heroes are Dioscuri, one of whom kills the other, and who, at a certain period, were divinities of light. What has not been explained is the striking resemblance of the story of Balder, Hœðr and Nanna on the one hand and that of Apollo, Idas and Marpessa on the other. Let us sum up the chief

¹ E. H. Meyer, *Mythologie der Germanen*, p. 392; L. Uhland, *Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage*, Stuttgart, 1865-73, vii. 22.

² His warlike character is probably secondary, as is that of Apollo; cf. Niedner, *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, xli. 305 ff.

³ This can perhaps be inferred from the late *Friðþjófs Saga*, though the matter is by no means certain.

points of the two versions of both the Greek and the Norse legend.

I. APOLLODOROS, I. 7, 8-9.

1. Apollo and Idas woo Marpessa.
2. Idas abducts her against her father's will.
3. War threatens to break out between Apollo and Idas.
4. Zeus interferes and lets the girl have her choice.
5. She chooses the mortal.

II. HOMER, *Il.* ix. 564.

1. Idas is engaged to Marpessa.
2. Apollo abducts her and probably dishonours her.
3. Idas takes her from him.

Compare with this the story of Balder and Høðr as told by Saxo and reconstructed by F. Kauffmann,¹ who, by the way, disbelieved in the parallelism pointed out by Bugge.

I. SAXO (Danish saga).

1. Balder and Høðr woo Nanna.
2. She chooses the mortal.
3. War breaks out between Balder and Høðr.
4. Høðr marries Nanna.
5. He kills Balder.

II. SAXO (Norse saga).

1. Høðr is engaged to Nanna and has her in his power.
2. Balder abducts her and dishonours her.
3. He is killed by Høðr.

We see that the story derived from a Danish saga corresponds almost exactly to the version of Apollodoros, the Norse version no less exactly to the version of Homer.

The Norse legend permits us to conclude with certainty that the Greek versions which have come down to us are incomplete and mutilated. This has long been suspected ; for a primitive story of rape and abduction is not likely

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 63 ff.

to have such a flat *dénouement* re-establishing a philistine *status quo ante*.

To come to the last and most important conclusion of this study, the similarity between the Greek and Norse legends is so great that they cannot have arisen independently and accidentally both in Greece and Scandinavia. Therefore Bugge was justified in assuming a literary borrowing. However, it is safe to say that Saxo Grammaticus is innocent of plagiarism as regards Apollodoros and that Snorri was not acquainted with the *Iliad*. Hence only one conclusion is possible, namely, that the legend is Indo-European. Granting this, it is clear that it must have been attached to at least one hero who existed in Indo-European times and who continued to exist both among the Greeks and the Teutons ; for legends of sufficient complication and presupposing a definite character of the chief protagonist do not float wildly in the space ; and this hero exists : *Balder is Apollo*.¹

This identity has been suspected by Harris, who already suggested that both names may go back to the name of the apple tree.² The existence of this myth confirms his conjecture.

Frazer and Kauffmann showed that the myth of Balder's death has its origin in some ancient ritual, the sacrifice of the vegetation demon. Now, if the identity proposed above between Balder and Apollo be true, we must look for similar rituals in the cult of Apollo, and traces of them are not wanting.

In the Laconian *Karneia*,³ a festival which fell in August,

¹ The similarity between the Teutonic god and his Greek self had struck the imagination of many scholars long before Harris. As early as 1689, O. Rudbeck, in the second volume of his *Atlantica*, pp. 236 ff. identified the two divinities.

² *The Ascent of Olympus*, p. 64.

³ Cf. on this subject : W. Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, Berlin, 1905, ii. 254 ff. ; Wide, in Roscher, ii. 1, cc. 961-4, and *Lakonische Kulte*, pp. 73 ff. ; Farnell, iv. 259 ff.

a man was decked with garlands and started running, pursued by some young men, called $\Sigma\tau\alpha\phi\upsilon\lambda\omega\delta\rho\mu\omega\iota$ or "Grapecluster-runners." If they caught him, this was considered a good omen; if they failed, it was an evil one. The ritual was a purely agrarian ceremony designed to secure a plentiful harvest and vintage. The person thus dressed up corresponds to the North-European "Pfingstlümmer," "May King," or "Jack-in-the-green." He is an incarnation of the spirit of vegetation, who must be caught by the farmers to ensure to them a rich harvest.¹ Frazer's researches have made it clear that these peasant rituals are quaint survivals of an older, more cruel custom, where the man embodying the spirit of vegetation was slain. This theory seems to be confirmed, as far as the *Karneia* is concerned, by the narrative of Theopompos who relates the slaying of a certain Akarnanian prophet by the name of Karnos.² Furthermore we know from Pausanias³ that the Dorian cult of Apollo Karneios was instituted to appease the manes of the slain Karnos. If it be objected that the statement of Theopompos refers to the slaying of the prophet priest leading the host at the ceremony and that we find nowhere the slaying of the priest king connected with the pursuit of the spirit of vegetation, we may say that the priest was originally in all probability the Jack-in-the-green himself, but ceded this rôle in aftertimes to a member of the community.⁴

Apollo also appears to have stood in special relationship to the hero Kyknos. Farnell pointed out that the latter seems originally to have been a priest of Apollo dying in the service of the god.⁵ It is to be noted that according

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.* p. 263.

³ *Descr. Gr.* iii. 13. 4.

⁴ Wide (in Roscher, ii. 1. c. 962), who does not mention the Balder myth and probably did not think of it when writing his article, suggests that the fleeing man was the priest or $\delta\gamma\pi\tau\eta\varsigma$ himself.

⁵ *Op. cit.* iv. 273.

to one legend he is slain by Achilles, the Dioscuric opponent of Apollo-Paris.¹ According to another he is stoned to death by that hero.² Now death by stoning is met with very frequently in Dioscuric myths. Idas hits Polydeukes with a stone and knocks him unconscious³; Mannhardt pointed out a parallel in the Lettic Dioscuri myths.⁴ Also the Gothic twins Ammius and Sarus are killed by stones at the command of King Ermanarich.⁵ It seems to be tolerably certain that Kyknos was another of those mortal incarnations of an immortal god or spirit. He, like the priest Karnos or Karneios, had to die in the ritual. Farnell hesitates to press these facts to the ultimate conclusion, that the death of the priest originally meant the death of the god.⁶ His bright and genial nature and his antagonism to the shadowy powers of the chthonian world was, according to the English scholar, part of his original character.⁷ But are we so sure about that? The tomb at Delphi referred to above certainly speaks against this assumption.⁸ Also it is very well to attribute the traces which have been found of a chthonian character of Apollo to the pre-Hellenic populations of Greece. But then the question naturally arises, Why was Apollo, the bright god of light and the upper world, chosen to replace pre-Hellenic chthonian divinities? Why was he associated with them at all? Wherever we meet with the substitution of one divinity by another, there must be certain *points d'attache*, which facilitate the substitution. Even the Orthodox Church had to take into account pagan susceptibilities and had to choose the right saint to replace the right pagan

¹ Ovid. *Metam.* xii. 76.

² Palaiph. *De incred.* 12.

³ Apollod. *Bibl.* iii. 11. 2.

⁴ "Die lettischen Sonnenmythen," *Zeitsch. f. Ethnol.* vii. 82.

⁵ O. L. Jiriczek, *Deutsche Heldenagen*, Strassburg, 1898, p. 190.

⁶ *Op. cit.* iv. 284.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 299.

⁸ Likewise the fact that at Delphi Apollo took the place of the chthonic Ge deserves careful consideration.

god or hero in a given locality. If we deny Apollo's ever having had chthonian character another explanation must be found to account for his taking a place in chthonian cults such as those of Hyakinthos, of Linos and of Skephros. Such an explanation has not as yet been given, and the logical conclusion is that Apollo was not always the bright god and immortal Olympian such as he appears in classical and Hellenistic times.¹ This character of brightness and purity does not exclude the possibility of a tragic death. If the Norse myth of Balder's end had not come down to us, no one would suspect that this bright and noble hero-god is doomed. Yet Scandinavian tradition has preserved this trait rather than any other of his life, so that it would seem that the only moments of importance in his career are his love for Nanna and his death.

Müllenhoff observes² that the passionate love of beautiful valkyries and young heroes doomed to a premature death was a favourite theme of heroic poetry, in ancient Scandinavia. But it was no less favourite with the Mediterranean nature cults. Does not Attis die for the love of Kybele, Adonis for that of Astarte? Does not Orpheus go to the netherworld to rescue his beloved one, a hopeless attempt? Are not Achilles and Paris killed in the prime of their lives for the love of Helen? Do not the Apharides and at least one of the Dioscuri meet with a premature end in their fight for the Leukippides? It is doubtless true what has often been observed by students of Old Scandinavian mythology that there is a peculiar resemblance between Balder and a number of heroes of epic legend such as Sigurd, Helgi, Hagbarth and others. But may their

¹ The same conclusion was reached by A. Döhring, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, v. 1902, p. 61. The German scholar suggests that the flat *dénouement* of the Idas myth may serve the purpose of saving the immortality of Apollo, who in the original version was probably slain by Idas.

² *Zeitsch. f. deutsches Altertum*, xxiii. 127.

legends not go back to the same root as the Balder myth? In Greece and in the Near East there was room for many vegetation heroes whose stories were so much alike that they could be easily identified by the syncretists of the Empire. May not the same have been true in ancient Germany and Scandinavia? Are not Balder and Frey much alike both in their general character and their love adventure which appears to have been the all-absorbing one in their lives? ¹

Reference has been made above to the old Cretan legend of the tomb of Zeus which earned for the islanders their proverbial reputation as liars. But we know now that what they reported was but the survival of an ancient belief of which the rest of the Graeco-Roman world was no longer conscious, that even Zeus was mortal. The creation of the Olympians was certainly the last stage of a long development which began with the savage cults of an unknown past and ended with the Zeus of Phidias and the Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome. Thanks to the blessings of the Mediterranean clime, the Hellenes developed a civilization which alone made possible the attainment of this highest stage of their religion. Their poor brothers on the shores of the Northern Ocean and the Baltic were less favoured; as late as the tenth century of our era they had not succeeded in reaching the stage which the majority of the Greeks appear to have attained when Homer wrote his immortal poems.

The Norse *Anses* were *semidei*, though the death of most of them had been postponed until the end of time. Still they are mortal, and they are keenly conscious of it, and it is because of this shortcoming that Odin becomes the restless "wanderer," trying to obtain information from all possible sources as to the doom which he sees hanging over him and his people. No such cares preoccupy the Olympians;

¹ Cf. Mogk, *Zeitsch. f. deutsche Phil.* xvii. 370; Paul's *Grundriss, loc. cit.*; Kauffmann, pp. 125 f.

Ewigklar und spiegelrein und eben
Fließt das zephyrleichte Leben
Im Olymp den Seligen dahin.
Monde wechseln und Geschlechter fliehen,
Ihrer Götterjugend Rosen blühen
Wandellos im ewigen Ruin.

This great difference between Teutonic and Hellenic religion is brought out, more clearly perhaps than in any other myth, in the fate of Balder the Beautiful and his Hellenic self, the Olympian Apollo.

We have found, then, in Balder the Beautiful an Indo-European Dioscuric vegetation demon and culture hero, originally probably a tree-spirit, but not connected with the oak. He was developed by both Hellenes and Teutons into a divinity of light. Both as a Dioscure and a culture hero he was the centre of a ritual and of an elaborate myth, relating his love for a woman and his premature death at the hands of his twin brother and rival.

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